DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 464 151 TM 033 836

AUTHOR Van Patten, James J.
TITLE Hi Stakes Testing Polarization or Accountability.
PUB DATE 2002-04-05
NOTE 9p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 1-5, 2002).
PUB TYPE Opinion Papers (120) -- Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Accountability; Achievement Tests; College Bound Students; Court Litigation; Elementary Secondary Education; *High Stakes Tests; *National Competency Tests; State Programs; Testing Programs; Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS Elementary Secondary Education Act

ABSTRACT

High stakes testing is associated with controversy and dialogue in this era of calls for accountability on the part of educators, and the controversy has been strengthened by the national testing plans included in the Leave No Child Behind Act (Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001). A look at the literature on high stakes testing and some of the legal positions that have been taken shows that the high stakes testing movement involves reductionism, mechanism, and reversion to the basics in measuring student achievement. Well-intended attempts to assess student achievement have often led to overemphasis on minutiae or basics rather than the understanding of larger issues and more complex questions. It is possible that the United States should explore the two-ladder system of education in Europe in which students can choose a vocational education track, with the possibility of entering the college track at a later date. This would provide opportunities for gainful employment at an early age and motivate youth not ready for a college bound route. (Contains 10 references.) (SLD)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made

ED 464 151

AERA 2002 Hi Stakes Testing Polarization or Accountability

James J. Van Patten
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. Van Patten

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

TM033836

Presented to the Society of Professors of Education
AERA, Sheraton 816-818, 8th Floor
1:15-1:55 PM
New Orleans, Louisiana
April 5, 2002

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Historical Perspective

In 1911 Frederick W. Taylor's *Scientific Management* including subdivisions of *Shop Management, the Principles of Scientific Management* and *Testimony Before the Special House Committee* was a guideline for increasing labor productivity and profit. Taylor worked to break down a worker's task into ever smaller parts so they could be uniform, easily measured and carried out. Taylor believed workers are inherently lazy and he suggested time and motion studies to maximize productivity.

An educational measurement philosophy was espoused by Edward L. Thorndike in the early 1930s. His philosophy was that everything that exists, exists in some quantity that can and should be measured. Over the years changes and refinements in assessment and measurement have penetrated every level of the educational system.

Callahan (1962) in his *Cult of Efficiency* described how school administrators and teachers were influenced by efficiency experts at the turn of the century. During the period, schools were often run like factories with machine-like efficiency, measuring teacher's output of units of information imparted. It was a period of micromanagement of every aspect of the teaching-learning process.

John Dewey (1930) wrote in "America-by-Formula" that quantification, mechanization and standardization are the marks of America. He continued by noting that our life is quick, excitable, undiscriminating, lacking in individuality and in direction by the intellectual life.

> The marks and signs of this "impersonalization"of the human soul are Quantification of life, with its attendant disregard of quality, its Mechanization and the almost universal habit of esteeming technique as an end, not as a means, so that organic and intellectual life is also "rationalized;" and finally, standardization..our pronounced trait is mass suggestibility (Dewey, *America-By-Forumula*: 25.)

The American first response to complex problems tends to be a search for and implementation of a cheap, quick, technological fix. After implementation of such a fix, committees, workshops, and symposium are held to find band aids for unforeseen negative multiplier effects of the action. Single interest groups' rapid response political action teams use litigation and the media to get their particular cause, interest, concern or

agenda disseminated to influence decision makers. Monitoring the media to ensure accuracy and quality of information disseminated was a concern of John Dewey. Educational success and failure is often dealt with in terms of media hype. In *Problems of Men* Dewey noted that events are often taken out of context and sensationalized.

> The catastrophic, namely, crime, accident, family rows, personal clashes and conflicts, are the most obvious form of breaches of continuity; they supply the element of shock which is the strictest meaning of sensation; they are the new par excellence, even though only the date of the newspaper could inform us whether they happened last year or this, so completed are they isolated from connections (347.)

Hi-Stakes Testing has led to controversy and dialogue as pros and cons are proclaimed.

Character education, civic responsibility, making a contribution to society, civility, comity are concepts not easily measured by standardized instruments, but are vital for civility in communities and society. Excessive emphasis on testing and measurement leads to a competitive educational system that may fail to take into account wide divergences of school facilities, social class, transportation access, parental involvement and neighborhood environment.

It would be interesting to view our present from 100 years in the future. One might see in a 21st century school setting in the United States, diverse school populations with a variety of nationalities represented in classrooms. English- as- a -second language students and minorities would predominate in some areas of the country as majority-minority populations change the demographics to a multicultural, multiracial society.

One might see a severely polarized scene with an array of parental lawsuits reflecting conflicting values, and goals. Some want more discipline; others want less discipline; critics demand accountability, politicians push legislation for standardized testing to demonstrate student achievement, and education at all levels is an arena for litigation in a litigious society. There is one constant, however. Parents call for rigor, improved school achievement results but when their children fail a test or complain about being overworked parents seek exemptions from performance based assessment criteria.

Curricular revisionism is also part of the current educational scene. From the future, one would note the elevation of third -world philosophies, reference to oppressed

minorities including women, a focus on disenfranchised marginalized people, and multiculturalism often taking the form of a protest movement against European values, history, and culture. This protest movement may be seen in articles, textbooks, educational decision making, accreditation bodies' guidelines, also in newly minted doctoral candidates philosophy and often reflected in a commitment to unidimensional points of view. As the United States becomes a multiracial society with majority-minority populations in over 50 percent of America's largest cities, educators will need to commit themselves to pluralism in theory and practice.

Hi Stakes Testing

President George W. Bush signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, (Leave No Child Behind Act) passed by a bipartisan Congressional vote in 2001 and into law in January 2002. The legislation set in place a call for statewide reading and mathematics tests to be given each year in grades 3-8. Olson (2002). The Robelen (2002) noted that the bill also required within twelve years a highly qualified teacher in every classroom and demonstrable progress by states and districts toward academic performance for all their students within twelve years.

After extensive debate, litigation, and negotiation, a committee set a high bar for states planning to use a mixture of state and local tests, or of criterion-referenced and norm-referenced tests, to measure student performance against state standards. Olson (2002) noted that the "No Child Left Behind" Act of 2001 required a formal process for standards and assessment that continues to draw fire from various groups for different causes. Four groups are suing the Educational Department to have the committee's membership include a balance between educators, parents and students. Olson also reported that some legislators felt states would have too much flexibility in putting assessment systems together; others were concerned about a patchwork of state and local assessments; still others were concerned with requirements for testing all students including homeless, those with disabilities and with English limited proficiency. The panel agreed that special-needs pupils must be assessed at the grade level and other special testing provisions were required for students with profound disabilities (Olson, 2002). Olson (2002) discussed a report by a federally financed assessment committee, " Using the National Assessment of Educational Progress to Confirm State Test Results."

designed to determine how to display gaps and gains among the various states in the required reading and mathematics sample tests of 4th and 8th graders. The National Assessment of Educational Progress, a federally financed assessment made up of testing experts, is continuing to examine how to develop a comparison of educational achievement among the states. Provisions are made for active participation by teachers, parents and other interested parties. Single interest groups are giving input to the test experts covering such subjects as oversampling, appropriateness of all background questions, and efforts to ensure that all NAEP questions are "secular, neutral and non-ideological." When asked what those words mean, Diane Ravitch, a board member and research professor at New York University responded "We don't know! It's not as if NAEP questions have been loaded with ideological or political imagery until now, but those are the kind of words that can cause a lot of problems." . Olson continues by noting that Puerto Rico is Spanish which may require tests developed with Spanish versions of math and reading.

The theory of standardized testing to measure student achievement has often unforeseen mulitiplier effects that may be detrimental to a broader view of student learning, of what is ultimately worth knowing. First, one would need to examine who is responsible for designing, and implementing standardized tests. Second, who determines the content of the standardized tests should be thoroughly investigated and test users should be acquainted with test makers. Third, consider how the test scores will be utilized to measure achievement, to provide accountability.

Consumerism, tokenism and benchmarking are imports from the corporate sector. The pressure on teachers, administrators and staff to teach to the test has led to excessive test preparation throughout the school year. Broader learning takes a secondary role when test scores are used to measure schools' achievements against each other. Keller (2000) noted that students are unmotivated and often don't care whether they pass the test or not. Since schools are graded on student outcomes on standardized tests, educators have provided a variety of material inducements including fast-food meals, donuts, pizza parties, savings bonds, candy bars, money, college scholarships, academic honors, cars, lap top computers, sports event tickets and U.S. Savings Bonds. Keller reported that a Houston high school gave a used Ford to a randomly selected student who passed Texas

exams. Students who passed all three segments of the Florida tests had a one-day paid trip to Universal Studios.

Florida requires standardized tests (FCAT) to be given throughout the school system. Teachers from the first day of the school year to the last are involved in finding a variety of ways of teaching for the test, preparing for the exam, giving it and waiting for the results. Schools are rated and teachers rewarded based on test scores. Due to educator protests, continuing efforts are made to fine tune the whole testing process to ensure that teachers in schools with at-risk students also have rewards. Massachusetts educators are debating what to do with student absentees who fail to take state mandated exams. Some suggest not including no-shows in final test score results while others believe all no-shows should be figured in the results to force educators to hold students accountable for failing to show up for test days. Absenteeism in middle and high school is a major challenge to educators whose salary increases depend in large part on test score results.

Research

Manzo (2001) reported on a *Rand Corporation* reading study which concluded that emphasis on boosting reading skills focus too much on basics rather than complex reading assignments. Manzo noted that effective teachers help students to summarize reading passages, identify themes, jot down notes and discuss the passages with classmates. Standardized assessment measures often revert to basics rather than dealing with understanding resulting in unintentionsally dumbing down tests.

Zehr (2001) reported on a study "Dismantling Bilingual Education, Implementing Bilingual Education: The California Initiative," by Christine H. Rossell, a Boston University Professor and Language Acquisition Researcher which found English immersion is more effective than bilingual education. The study has been criticized by Bilingual Education advocates. Christine was hissed and booed by attendees at her American Education Research Association presentation on her comprehensive study of the progress of English-Learners in California since proposition 227. Zehr noted that bilingual education laws need to be made clearer with continuing research to examine results of bilingual and total English immersion education.

Hi Stakes Testing and the Law

Against. A lawsuit brought by 13 New Orleans parents to bar state and school districts from denying promotion to students who fail hi-stakes tests under the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program for the 21st Century was denied a hearing by the U.S. Supreme Court, according to Walsh (2002). Parents in *Parents Against Testing Before Teaching v. Orleans Parish School Board* (2001) were protesting promotion denial for 18,000 Louisiana students based on test performance. A U.S. Court of Appeals (2001) earlier had upheld a lower court's dismissal of a lawsuit that involved property interest in receiving a high school diploma.

For: In *Public Agenda: Reality Check 2002,* a study under a grant by *the Pew Charitable Trust* and the *GE Fund* revealed few students were unsettled by efforts to raise standard by testing, and teachers, parents and students supported maintaining student assessments. The study further found that for the fifth year in a row employers were disappointed with the skills of graduating high school students. Seventy-two percent of employers and fifty-eight percent of professors give students low marks on being motivated and conscientious.

Conclusion. The Hi Stakes Testing movement involves reductionism, mechanism, and reversion to basics in measuring student achievement levels. Well intended attempts to assess student achievement have often led to overemphasis on minutiae or basics rather than understanding larger issues and more complex questions. Trying to find a uniform assessment to measure student achievement, to hold teachers and administrators accountable for effective learning, is difficult in a democracy with many voices demanding to be heard. Opinions vary as to the need for standardized assessment tests. Low income, at risk, minority students and their parents seek alternative forms of measurement. Teachers with under-motivated, low achieving students find it difficult, due to the nature of their schools demographics. to have their merit increases based on grading schools' achievement levels.

Perhaps we should rethink the historical one ladder system of education and explore Europe's two-ladder system. Under this system there would be an opportunity for students to choose a vocational education track with the provision that they might enter the college bound track at a latter date. This would provide opportunities for

gainful employment at an early age as well as motivate youngsters not ready for a college bound-route.

References

Dewey, John (1930). "America-By-Formula," in *Individualism Old and New*: New York: Minton, Balch & Company: 25.

Keller, Bess (2000, May 3.) " Incentives for Test-Takers Run the Gamut." *Education Week*: 1. 18.

Manzo, Hathleen Kennedy (2002, March 6.) "Rand: Don't Let Basics Obstruct Comprehension Strategies," *Education Week*: 9

Olson, Lynn (2002, March 12). "Want to Confirm States Test Scores? It's Complex, But NAEP Can Do It," *Education Week*: 1, 10, 11.

Olson, Lynn (2002, March 27). "Negotiators Retain Heart of Ed. Dept. Proposals," *Education Week*: 24, 27.

" Public Agenda: Reality Check 2002," (2002, March 6). *Education Week*: S 1-S 8.

Robelen, Erik W. (2002 January 9). "ESEA To Boost Federal Role in Education," *Education Week*: 1, 28.

Taylor, Frederick W. (1911) *Scientific Management*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers: 30-32, 82, 89-90, 96, 141, 142.

Walsh, Mark (2002, March 6.) " Court Declines Case Challenging Promotion-Assessment Ties," *Education Week*: 30.

Zehr, Mary Ann (2001, March 6). " Bilingual Education Critic's Research Sparking Debate," *Education Week*: 5.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

ERIC

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

TM033836

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: H. S. Stakes Testing: Polarization or Accountability	
Author(s): James J. Van Patten	
Corporate Source: U of Arkansas Fayetteville	Publication Date: April 2002

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents
PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) 1	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) 2A	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) 2B
Level 1 ↑ [X]	Level 2A ↑ [ ]	Level 2B ↑ [ ]
Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) *and* paper copy.	Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only	Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here, → please

Signature: James J Van Patten	Printed Name/Position/Title: JAMES J VAN PATTEN	
Organization/Address: 434 Hawthorn St Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701	Telephone: 501 521 1824	FAX
	E-Mail Address: JVANPATTE@aol.com	Date: April 2002

(over)

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, *or*, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

University of Maryland
ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation
1129 Shriver Laboratory
College Park, MD 20742
Attn: Acquisitions

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Processing and Reference Facility
4483-A Forbes Boulevard
Lanham, Maryland 20706

Telephone: 301-552-4200
Toll Free: 800-799-3742
FAX: 301-552-4700
e-mail: ericfac@inet.ed.gov
WWW: http://ericfac.piccard.csc.com

EFF-088 (Rev. 2/2000)